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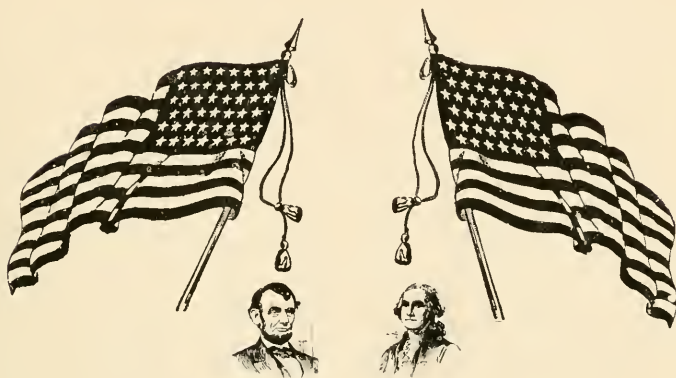
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FIVE-MINUTE
MEMORIAL ADDRESS
ON THE
LIFE OF WASHINGTON



February 12-22, 1918

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Viewed in the light of its origin, the Monroe Doctrine carries no suggestion that we must not send our troops beyond the borders of the country. Tested by its environments, it means that wherever Liberty has gained a toe-hold our peace and safety require us, and it is our policy, to keep her there.

Washington -- Jefferson -- Monroe
Lincoln -- Roosevelt
Wilson

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MEMORIAL ADDRESS

ON THE

LIFE OF WASHINGTON

Washington and Lincoln Memorial Meeting

February 12, 1918



WE are assembled in the name of Washington and Lincoln. Any gathering at these fountain heads of the Republic cannot but thrill with a responsive pulse of patriotism. You, my fellow-citizens, suckled at the paps of Liberty, there is nothing I can say to you of Washington or Lincoln that you do not know by intuition. You, the scions of a glorious past, I need not admonish you to make the lives of these great men your own. They are already ours, by sympathy; the exponents of our heart-throbs and desires. In them we live, as they gave us life.

What I shall say to you, therefore, is not a lecture, nor argument, nor a demonstration. It is a eulogy,—an ecstasy! It is a reassertion of fundamental truth: that these, the fathers of our country, chosen by the just logic of democracy to give it birth and sustenance, still guide in spirit the destiny of our nation. History has a way of exalting human agents, for the shaping of its policies. If the latter spring from the grace of Providence, they are eternal. We know them by their agents. Washington and Lincoln are perpetual; Bismarck looms with but a fading glory.

George Washington was born at Bridges Creek, Westmoreland county, Virginia, February 22, 1732. For three generations back, his ancestors were colonists. His father died when George was twelve years old, leaving him and his mother on a Rappahannock farm. He received only the practical and elementary education afforded in colonial Virginia. He learned something from books, but a great deal more from contact with forest life and manly sports; and he was bred to the habits of a Virginia gentleman, suh! His schooling stopped at sixteen. He then became surveyor for Lord Fairfax; and incidentally studied military tactics and the manual of arms, until 1751.

He was not a military expert; but he met the problems that came to him with a "common sense lifted to the level of genius." In 1752 he was appointed major and adjutant-general of the Virginia militia, and was placed in charge of one of the four military tracts of that state. From then until 1758 he distinguished himself by covering the retreat of military failures; notably that of Braddock. But he redeemed the confidence reposed in his prowess, turning defeat into victory by the capture of Fort Duquesne, in 1758.

The real key to the character of Washington lies in his devotion to the great cause of freedom. From 1769 to 1776 he was active among those hopeful spirits of liberty whose limited view had not yet pierced the camouflage of British pretensions, and whose ancestral bias still clung to the motherland. It required the thunder of Concord and Lexington, and of Bunker Hill, to rouse his deep being to a better vision. The appeal of the red, warm blood of his countrymen,—blood of his own,—at length opened his heart and mind to the coming of the new nation. Thenceforth he was American, with a new zest and purpose. And that purpose was accomplished at Yorktown, October 16, 1781.

The diamond sparkles best against a darkened background. The adamant sublimity of Washington shines forth the brightest in his most crucial hour. Considering the issue at stake, perhaps no greater calamity was ever inflicted upon a decent people than the winter at Valley Forge. It was the Vale of Despair, the low ebb of human aspiration, the direful strait that caused many a weak soul to abandon hope. But we should be ever grateful for Valley Forge, because of its compensation,—it gave us Washington. Washington, despoiled of the sinews of power which a strong government owes to its military chief; Washington, hampered and ham-strung by the wrangling of jealous States and an adverse Congress; Washington, waning in popularity, and menaced by the foul treachery of Gates and his cohorts, who conspired to displace him,—it gave us Washington, the man, stripped of everything except that great reserve of man-faith and soul-power which raised him above all mankind, yet made him brother of all men.

Such a man can never be entirely deserted. In a democracy of free thought and frank discussion, patriotic zeal and stress may run awry at times; but mutual dependence and forbearance soon correct the error. Our national ideals and solidarity will not brook the segregation of the American people by the mark of lineal descent. If a large portion of our citizenship have found their lineage presently assailed, there is comfort in the knowledge that the evil is but temporary. Their interest is the interest of the people; their heritage, the heritage held by the people; their government, the government established for the people. They cannot be denied their birthright, and they will protect it. Their record in the building of the nation stands, impregnable and permanent; and its efficient germ dates back at least to Valley Forge. Adversity might shrink the loyalty of General Washington's supporters; but there were still a few men and women, who, when the Congress failed to make adequate provision for his tattered troops, came forward with right good will, and with right good gold, to clothe and feed them. On December 31, 1777, the Continental Congress framed its protest to the Council of Massachusetts-Bay concerning the "extortionate views and demands" of the contractors in that state and "the depravity of morals in so many of the citizens of these states," which must "unquestionably issue, at no very distant period, in the destruction of the liberties of this continent." It was a call to patriotic devotion; a test of loyalty. Over against that challenge, the names of Robert Morris and Haiman Salomon, of General Mifflin and Christoph Ludwig, of Michael Hillegas the continental treasurer, of Margretha Greider, of Molly Pitcher, and others on the roll of



sacrifice and honor, stand out in bold relief. These surely were American; among them, notably, Americans of German parentage.

The life of man has but little interest except as it affects his fellow-men. Virtue, truth, love,—these can have no growth or purpose if limited to self-perfection; they bloom only when devoted to the service of our neighbors. The life of Washington is interesting, because of its effect upon the human race. The virtue, truth, and love of Washington bore fruit, because he brought them to the altar of his fellowmen. No author, no statesman, no clergyman, no poet and no orator has ever yet been able to exhaust that reservoir of benediction. We can but draw from it according to the time and the occasion. Our business now is war! In the present crisis, Washington, with all other living men or dead, must answer to the acid test: What is his position in the world-war?

We need have no misgivings as to where George Washington stands; he stands with Jefferson and with Monroe, with Lincoln, with Roosevelt, and with Wilson. Some have said that we are nosing into entangling alliances, in violation of the policies of Washington and the Monroe Doctrine. But they have not searched or found the life and motive of those policies. For their enlightenment, there should be placed at the front entrance of each state capitol, in connection with the Hoover food signs, these words of Washington:

A passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. . . . Such an attachment of *a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation* dooms the former to be a satellite of the latter. . . . Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government.

Along with that, on the sacred banner that leads our “Sammies” into the front-line trenches, should be emblazoned these further words from the Farewell Address:

If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

It was indeed a “small and weak nation” upon which fell the solemn duty of guarding the new-found liberty; and well might its author, in the face of a world of wolves, warn his free people to be constantly awake against its baneful foes. But there breathes throughout his message a prophesy of the day when belligerent nations would not lightly hazard giving provocation. That was the underlying motive of it, as construed by his contemporaries; and that construction led up to the Monroe Doctrine.

Viewed in the light of its origin, that doctrine carries no suggestion that we must not send our troops beyond the borders of the country. On the contrary, tested by its environments, it means that wherever Liberty has gained a toe-hold our peace and safety require us, and it is our policy, to keep her there. We went beyond our borders, we meddled in the affairs of other nations, when the Holy Alliance sought

to restore her lost colonies to Spain. And it was justified by Jefferson, twin-soul of Washington's conception of American liberty, in these words:

Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, *never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with Cis-Atlantic affairs.*

That Jefferson was thinking chiefly of the second duty, is apparent from this further thought in his counsel to Monroe, added as the *bed-rock reason* for it, applicable today as then:

While Europe is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavors should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom.

Thereupon Monroe, red-hot on the trail of Washington and Jefferson, issued his famous manifesto:

We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

Nor was Lincoln slow to take the cue, as testified by the words of Seward:

The presence and operations of the French army in Mexico and its maintenance of authority there is a cause of serious concern to the United States. . . . That authority is in direct antagonism to the policy of this government and the principles on which it is founded.

Roosevelt, likewise, was alive and poppin' to the "wiles of foreign influence" in the Venezuela mix-up. Bismarck might cry out against the Monroe Doctrine as an "international impertinence;" but the German navy sailed away from Columbia's troubled waters.

Through it all we see the hand and heart of Washington. Back of him stands his progeny,—that magnificent array of pep and faith,—ten million volunteers at the registration polls, whose only grievance is that they are forced to state exemption claims; behind them fifteen millions more in the reserves. All of them ready to make good these words of the Farewell Address, which should be read in parallel with Wilson's messages, because the import is the same:

It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.

In line with that, the following from the letter to Sir Edward Newenham:

It is not in the power of the proudest and most polite people on earth to prevent us from becoming a great, a respectable, and a commercial nation, if we shall continue united and faithful to ourselves.

Ah, yes, George Washington is with us in the present war. Europe is no longer the "domicile of despotism"; freedom has found a foothold there. The "wiles of foreign influence" are as menacing today as they were then. The policies of Bismarck are in a clash with the policies of Washington. Pan-Germanism cannot withstand the impact of the Monroe Doctrine; nor shall Britannia rule the waves. Our peace and safety cry again for liberty,—liberty to all the peoples of the earth! That is the meaning of the life of Washington.



THE life of man has but little interest except as it affects his fellowmen. Virtue, truth, love,—these can have no growth or purpose if limited to self-perfection; they bloom only when devoted to the service of our neighbors. The life of Washington is interesting, because of its effect upon the human race. The virtue, truth, and love of Washington bore fruit, because he brought them to the altar of his fellowmen.



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